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Phenomena Of Love, *Nafs* And Illicit Sexual Behaviors Amongst Teenagers In South Malaysia

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Abstract

This research is to investigate the phenomena of love and '*nafs*' amongst Malaysian teenagers involved in sexual deviance. This is a correlational research based on Imam Ghazali and Love theories. A total of 1000 respondents were selected through random sampling. Questionnaires containing items on Love Styles (Sidek, 1998) and '*Nafs*' (Faizah and Norshelida, 2011) were employed as the research instruments. Results based on descriptive analyses indicated that the logical love style dominated the respondents' love style ($M=3.64$) followed by friendship love ($M=3.54$), romantic love ($M=3.10$) and sacrificial love ($M=3.09$). Findings also showed that majority of the respondents were at the '*nafs mulhimah*' stage in terms of sexual activity, dominated by holding hands (62.4%), followed by hugging (37.1%), kissing (34.3%), caressing (23.6%), oral sex / masturbating (18.8%) and illicit sex (8.7%). The results also show that the majority of teenagers who were involved in illicit sex were females (65.6%), while 34.6% were males. Most teenagers involved in illicit sex come from family backgrounds with parents who were self employed (33.33%) with an average monthly income of RM 1000.00. Inferential analyses results revealed that romantic love ($\beta=0.29$, $p=0.00$), friendship love ($\beta=-0.94$, $p=0.011$), '*nafs amarah*' ($\beta=0.31$, $p=0.00$), '*nafs lawammah*' ($\beta=0.18$, $p=0.00$) and '*nafs mulhimah*' ($\beta=-0.77$, $p=0.00$) as the significant predictors of sexual deviance.

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Introduction

Human capital is an important investment for the development of a nation. In this regard, education plays an important role in the development of human capital. Through its education system, Malaysia aspires to develop

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individuals who are able to think critically and creatively, possess problem-solving skills, have the strength and ability to face the global world, possess strong identity, are competent and skillful (Education Development Master Plan, 2006-2010) to fulfill the needs of a developed country, which Malaysia hopes to achieve by the year 2020. Realizing that today's youths are the future leaders (Saadah, 2009) and that the characteristics of youths may reflect the characteristics of our future generation, their individuality should be nurtured at an early age. In the search for identity, teenagers face not only turbulence and challenges, but they also experience love and want to be loved in return. However, experiencing love entails a gamut of emotional feelings, due to critical changes in thinking, feelings, personality and social relations (Court & Givon, 2003) and heightened sexual development (Glasier et. al., 2006). This stimulates teenagers to explore and experiment with sexuality, fantasies and reality in an effort to align sexuality with identity (Santrock, 2008), which have resulted in the desire to know about sex, to think about sex appeal and to imagine how to perform sexual acts (Steinberg, 2007).

2. Background of the problem

Illicit sexual behaviors among teenagers are becoming more serious. A study conducted by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's (UKM) Children and Youth Psychology specialist, Dr Khidzir Ismail (2006) revealed a shocking finding related to the sexual behavior of high risk female students. Based on the study, all 887 out of 888 high-risk female students surveyed admitted that they have experienced sexual intercourse. A recent study conducted by Universiti Putra Malaysia study (UPM), also revealed that 300 Malay youths in urban and rural areas between the ages of 13-25 years admitted to being engaged in some form of sexual misconduct, ranging from free sex to abortion. Besides that, Assistant Superintendent of Police, of the Royal Malaysian Police Force, Naemah Mohd Sheriff, reported that there were 115 cases of sexual crimes reported in the first nine months of 2007, showing an increase in four states, namely the federal territory of Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Johor and Penang. Based on records obtained from the Hospital of Tuanku Ampuan Rahimah Klang (HTKL) in Selangor, a total of 106 teenagers have been recorded to be pregnant out of wedlock from 2008 to 210. The Kuala Lumpur Hospital (HKL) records showed a rising trend in unwed teen pregnancies with 50 cases in 2008, 67 cases in 2009 and 38 cases up to June 2010 (Berita Harian, 25/07/2010). In addition, the Program Coordinator of International Missionary Training activists, Kamaruddin Kassim in Harian Metro (15 March 2009) was reported as saying teenagers are getting bolder and feel more free to commit sexual acts, resulting in some resorting to committing several abortions. In addition, the official report of the National Registration Department (NRD) has also shown a total of 257,000 registered birth certificates without the father's name recorded since 2000 up to July 2008. Sexual misconduct among teenagers becomes more critical in view of 67 reported cases of baby abandonment in 2005, 83 cases in 2006, 65 cases in 2007, 102 cases in 2008, 79 cases in 2009 and 91 cases in 2010. In January 2011 alone, there were 34 reported cases of abandoned babies in Malaysia's main newspapers.

3. Problem Statement

Teenagers are important future assets. They will become the main individuals to lead and develop a country. They also play a significant role in sustaining a country's national sovereignty and in protecting a country from various threats. However, in view of the current trend in teen sexual misconduct, could Malaysia nurture its teenagers to become good leaders, in its aspirations to become a developed nation by 2020? Why are today's teenagers involved in illicit sex? Does love or *nafs* influence teenagers' involvement in sexual activity? What is the pattern of teenagers' preferred love styles? Could love and *nafs* predict teenagers' sexual behaviors? This study is thus carried out to further investigate the phenomena of love, *nafs* and sexual behaviors among teenagers in the South of Malaysia.

4. Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the aims of this study are to investigate the patterns of love, *nafs* and sexual activities among teenagers. The study also aimed to examine the profile and predictive factors of sexual activities among teenagers.

5. Previous Study

Several studies have been conducted in investigating sexual misconduct among teenagers in Malaysia. Among them include studies conducted by Ahmad (2003), Norazila (2008), Azura (2009), Saadah (2009), Fauziah (2009) and Azni (2012).

Ahmad (2003) conducted a qualitative study to identify the causes of sexual behavior deviation of six teenagers from Felda Sungai Mas, who were arrested by Offices from the Kota Tinggi Islamic Religious Council. Results of the study suggest that the main reason for the teenagers' involvement in illicit sex was due to their failure to observe the five daily prayers. This was followed by persuasion by their respective partners to perform the illicit sexual behavior, weakness in the curriculum which failed to educate teenagers on matters pertaining to illicit sexual behaviors, influence of mass media and curiosity of the teenagers themselves in wanting to know more about sexual acts. Similarly, Saadah's (2009) study on 300 respondents in Kulai also showed that lack of religious values was the main factor contributing to sexual misconduct. In another study, Fauziah (2009) investigated the impact of locus of control to the pattern of sexual behavior among 270 adolescents in Johor. The study showed that there is a significant relationship between the locus of control and sexual behaviors such as kissing, caressing, hugging and watching porn movies.

Tendency toward sexual misconduct activities are much higher than generally perceived, as shown by the study of Norazila Sugiman (2008). She investigated the perception of sex practices of 427 respondents in Malaysia's Public Higher Education Institutions (IPTA). The study found the respondents perceived sexual activities among teenagers to be high ($M = 4.69$) and the main factor contributing towards illicit sexual behavior to be due to mass media ($M = 3.96$). Likewise, Azura's (2009) study on 240 respondents in Johor Bahru also showed mass media to be the highest contributing factor influencing sexual misconduct, followed by peer pressure, lack of religious upbringing and lack of support from family members. A study conducted by Azni (2012) showed the percentage of involvement of teen sexual misconduct is one of the highest social misconduct, with 34.2% respondents involved in illicit sexual behaviors at a college in Southern Malaysia. All these studies suggest that the phenomenon of illicit sexual activities among teenagers is more widespread than previously thought, and become has become a social epidemic.

6. Research Methodology

This research adopted the quantitative research approach, using correlation to determine the relationships between scientific variables (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996).

6.1 Population and Research Sample

The study was conducted in ten districts in Johor, comprising teenagers aged between 14 and 16 years. The sampling is based on random sampling according to the list of secondary schools in Johor. 1000 teenagers in Johor were involved in this study.

6.2 Instrument

In this study, the questionnaire was used due to its practical, accurate and effective nature of data analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). There are three sections of the questionnaire which consists of Section A, Section B and Section C.

6.2.1 Section A: Love Styles

Section A comprises items from the Love Style Inventory (LSI) that has been adapted by Sidek Mohd Noah in 1998 (Chong, 2002), which consists of 60 questions consisting of six styles of love constructs of friendship, romance, games, logical, sacrifice and belonging. The minimum score for each item is one, while the maximum

score is six.

6.2.2 Section B: *Nafs* Inventory

Section B comprises forty-seven items on the types of *nafs* present among the respondents. The researcher categorized the types of *nafs* into five categories which were *ammarah*, *lawamah*, *mulhimah*, *mutmainah* and *rodhiah*. The items were rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 denoting 'never' and 5 denoting 'very often'. The reliability of the Cronbach alpha for the *Nafs* inventory is 0.87.

6.2.3 Section C : Sexual Activities

This section consists of six categories and was developed by Faizah et. al. (2012) to measure sexual activities such as holding hands, hugging, caressing, kissing, oral sex and illicit sex. Each question item was rated on a scale of between 1 and 5, with 1 denoting 'never' and 5 denoting 'very often'. The reliability of the Cronbach alpha for this questionnaire is 0.9.

7. Pilot Study

177 teenagers were involved in this pilot study. Analysis of the data from the pilot study showed that the Cronbach Alpha for the Love Style Instrument was 0.9, the *Nafs* Inventory was 0.87, and the Sexual Activities was 0.9.

8. Findings

8.1 Analysis of Love Style, *Nafs* , Sexual Activities and Respondents' Profile

It was discovered that the highest mean value for the love style of the respondents was attributed to logical love with a mean value of 3.64. This was followed by friendship (M=3.54), romantic (M=3.10), sacrifice (M=3.10), belonging (M=2.99) and game (M=2.80). For the *nafs* component, the findings revealed that the highest mean value was attributed to *nafs mulhimah*, with a mean value of 3.45. The second highest mean score of 3.12 was for *nafs mutmainah*, followed by *nafs Rodhiah* (M=2.82), *lawwamah nafs* (M=2.51) and *nafs ammarah* (M=2.37). The results show that holding hands was the most dominant sexual behavior of the respondents, with a percentage of 62.4%. This was followed by hugging, 37.1% (n=371), 34.3% kissing (n=343), 23.6% caressing (n=236), 18.8% oral sex (n=188) and 8.7% involvement in illicit sex (n=87).

The findings reveal that majority of the female respondents (65.5%) were involved in illicit sex compared to the males (34.5%). It was also discovered that majority of the teenagers' parents were self-employed (33.33%), followed by working in the private sector (22.99%) and others (18.4%). Besides that, majority of the teenagers' fathers were earning incomes of less than RM 1000 (51.7%) followed by income of RM 1001-2000 (19.5%) and income of RM2001-3000 (8.5%).

8.2 Inferential Analysis

The findings show that romantic love ($\beta = 0.29$, $p = 0.00$), friendship ($\beta = -0.94$, $p = 0.002$), *ammarah nafs* ($\beta = 0.31$, $p = 0.00$), *lawammah nafs* ($\beta = 0.17$, $p = 0.00$) and *mulhimah nafs* ($\beta = -0.77$, $p = 0.005$) as the significant predictors of sexual behaviors.

9. Discussion, Implication and Suggestion

Overall, the results showed that the most dominant love style among the respondents was the logical love style, followed by romantic love, and friendship love. These findings contradict that of Choong's (2002) who found the

friendship style to be the most dominant style of love practiced by students. Although the logical pattern style of love among the respondents dominate the style of love, but this style of love does not influence teenagers' sexual misconduct compared to the romantic love style. This coincides with Siti Hawa's (2010) study, which showed that people with romantic love are committed in a relationship and have a tendency to be involved in sexual activities as a form of display of real love. In addition, the study also showed *nafs ammarah*, *lawammah* and *mulhimah* to be factors that can predict sexual misconduct. This study is in line with Ahmad's (2003) study which showed that failure to perform daily prayers is a key factor that influence teenagers involved in sexual misconduct.

Based on these findings, it is suggested that further research focus on the construct of a model or module to assist teenagers involved in illicit sexual activities to manage their sexual urges. Cooperation, collaboration and concern among all parties involved in the development of civilized young Muslims should be strived for. Concerted efforts from various institutions such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Family Development, Ministry of Information, Director of Islamic Da'wah Division and NGOs have to be formed, planned and mobilized in an effort to develop quality human capital.

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